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Preached in the CATHEDRAL CHURCH of
ST. PAUL, LONDON:
On THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 1793.

BEING THE TIME
Of the YEARLY MEETING of the
CHILDREN Educated in the CHARITY-
SCHOOLS, in and about the Cities of LONDON
and WESTMINSTER.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND
Worsley
SAMUEL, LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

Published at the Request of the SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,
And the TRUSTEES of the several SCHOOLS.

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ON THE 11th JUNE 1792

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LUKE IV. 18, 19.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BE-
 CAUSE HE HATH ANOINTED ME TO PREACH
 THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR; HE HATH SENT
 ME TO HEAL THE BROKEN-HEARTED, TO
 PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES,
 AND RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
 TO SET AT LIBERTY THEM THAT ARE
 BRUISED, TO PREACH THE ACCEPTABLE
 YEAR OF THE LORD.

IT was, as it should seem, upon our Saviour's
 first appearance in the Synagogue at Nazareth,
 the residence of his family, in the character
 of a Public Teacher, that to the astonishment of
 that assembly, where he was known only as the
 Carpenter's Son, he applied to himself that remark-
 able passage of Isaiah, which the evangelist recites
 in the words of my text: "This day, said our
 Lord, is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The

phrase,

phrase, "this day," is not, I think, to be understood of that particular sabbath-day, upon which he undertook to expound this prophetic text to the men of Nazareth; nor "your ears," of the ears of the individual congregation, assembled at the time within the walls of that particular synagogue. The expressions are to be taken according to the usual latitude of common speech; "this day," for the whole time of our Lord's appearance in the flesh, or at least for the whole season of his public ministry; and "your ears," for the ears of all your inhabitants of Judæa and Galilee, who now hear my doctrine, and see my miracles. Our Lord affirms, that in his works, and in his daily preaching, his countrymen might discern the full completion of this prophetic text; inasmuch as he was the person, upon whom the Spirit of Jehovah was, whom Jehovah had anointed "to preach the Gospel to the Poor," whom Jehovah had sent "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of sight to the Blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

None

None but an inattentive reader of the Bible can suppose, that these words were spoken by the prophet Isaiah of himself. Isaiah had a portion, without doubt, but a portion only, of the Divine Spirit. In any sense in which the Spirit of Jehovah was upon the prophet, it was more eminently upon him, who received it not by measure. The prophet Isaiah restored not, that we know, any blind man to his sight; he delivered no captive from his chain. He predicted indeed the restoration of the Jews, from the Babylonian captivity; their final restoration, from their present dispersion; and the restoration of Man, from the worse captivity of Sin. But he never took upon him to proclaim the actual commencement of the season of liberation; which is the thing properly implied, in the phrase of "preaching deliverance to the captives." To the broken-hearted he administered no other balm, than the distant hope of one who, in future times, should bear their sorrows; nor were the Poor, of his own time, particularly interested in his preaching. The characters, therefore, which the speaker seems to assume in this prophetic text, are of two kinds; such as are in no sense answered by any

known circumstance in the life and character of Isaiah, or of any other personage of the ancient Jewish history; but in every sense, literal and figurative, of which the terms are capable, apply to Christ; and such as might in some degree be answered in the Prophet's character, but not otherwise, than as his office bore a subordinate relation to Christ's office, and his predictions to Christ's preaching. It is a thing well known to all, who have been conversant in Isaiah's writings, that many of his prophecies are conceived in the form of dramatic dialogues; in which the usual persons of the sacred piece are God the Father, the Messiah, the Prophet himself, and a Chorus of the Faithful. But it is left to the reader to discover, by the matter spoken, how many of these speakers are introduced, and to which speaker each part of the discourse belongs. It had been reasonable therefore to suppose, that this, like many other passages, is delivered in the person of the Messiah, had our Lord's authority been wanting for the application of the prophecy to himself. Following the express authority of our Lord, in the application of this prophecy

prophecy to him, we might have spared the use of any other argument, were it not that a new form of Infidelity of late hath reared its hideous head; which carrying on an impious opposition to the genuine Faith, under the pretence of Reformation, in its affected zeal to purge the Christian doctrine of I know not what corruptions, and to restore our creed to what it holds forth as the primitive standard; under that infatuation, which by the just judgment of God ever clings to self-sufficient Folly, pretends to have discovered inaccuracies in our Lord's *own* doctrine, and scruples not to pronounce him, not merely a Man, but a Man peccable and fallible in that degree, as to have misquoted and misapplied the prophecies of the Old Testament. In this instance our great Lord and Master defies the profane censures of the doctors of that impious school. This text, referred to its original place in the Book of Isaiah, is evidently the opening of a prophetic Dialogue; and in the particulars of the character described in it, it carries its own internal evidence of its necessary reference to our Lord, and justifies his application of it to himself:

as will further appear from a more particular exposition.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,” or, “over me.” The expression implies a superiority and controul of the Divine Spirit: the Spirit’s government and guidance of the Man, and the Man’s entire submission, in the prosecution of the work he had in hand, to the Spirit’s direction.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me.”—Under the Law, the three great offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, were conferred by the ceremony of anointing the person. The unction of our Lord was the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at his Baptism. This was analogous to the ceremony of anointing; as it was a mark publicly exhibited, “that God had anointed him, to use St. Peter’s expression, with the Holy Ghost and with Power.”

It will seem nothing strange, that Jesus, who was himself God, should derive authority from the unction

unction of that Spirit, which, upon other occasions, he is said to give, and that he should be under the Spirit's direction; if it be remembered, that our Lord was as truly Man, as he was truly God. That neither of the two natures was absorbed in the other, but both remained in themselves perfect, notwithstanding the union of the two in one Person. The Divine Word, to which the humanity was united, was not, as some ancient Heretics imagined, instead of a Soul to inform the Body of the Man; for this could not have been without a diminution of the Divinity; which, upon this supposition, must have become obnoxious to all the perturbations of the human Soul;—to the passions of Grief, Fear, Anger, Pity, Joy, Hope, and Disappointment; to all which our Lord, without sin, was liable. The human nature in our Lord was compleat in both its Parts; consisting of a Body and a rational Soul. The rational Soul of our Lord's human nature was a distinct thing from the principle of Divinity, to which it was united; and being so distinct, like the Souls of other men, it owed the right use of its faculties, in the exercise of

them upon religious subjects, and its uncorrupted rectitude of will, to the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus indeed "was anointed with this holy oil above his fellows," inasmuch as the intercourse was uninterrupted; the illumination by infinite degrees more full, and the consent and submission, on the part of the Man, more perfect, than in any of the sons of Adam. In so much that he alone of all the human race, by the strength and light imparted from above, was exempt from sin, and rendered superior to temptation. To him the Spirit was given not by measure. The unmeasured infusion of the Spirit into the Redeemer's soul, was not the Means, but the Effect, of its union to the second Person of the Godhead. An union, of which this had been the means, had differed only in degree from that, which is, in some degree, the privilege of every true believer—which, in an eminent degree, was the privilege of the Apostles, who by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon them on the day of pentecost, were in some sort, like their Lord, anointed with the unction from on high. But in him

him the Natures were united; and the uninterrupted perfect commerce of his human Soul, with the Divine Spirit, was the effect and the privilege of that mysterious conjunction.

“ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel——”

To preach the Gospel.—The original word, which is expressed in our english Bibles by the word Gospel, signifies *good news*, a joyful message, or glad tidings. And our english word, Gospel, traced to its original in the Teutonic language, is found to carry precisely the same import; being a compound of two words, an adjective signifying *good*, and a substantive which signifies a *tale*, *message*, or *declaration*. But as this signification of the english word, by the general neglect of the parent language, is pretty much forgotten, or remembered only among the Learned; it may give perspicuity to the Text, if for the single word “ Gospel,” we substitute the two words, “ glad tidings.” “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

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“ because

“ because he hath anointed me to preach glad
“ tidings to the Poor; he hath sent me to heal
“ the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the
“ Captives, and recovering of sight to the Blind;
“ to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach
“ the acceptable Year of the Lord.”

Our Blessed Lord, in the course of his ministry, restored the sight of the corporeal eye to many, who were literally blind. By his miraculous assistances, in various instances of worldly affliction, far beyond the reach of any human aid, he literally healed the broken heart—As in the instance of Jairus, whose breathless daughter he revived; of the widow of Nain, whose son he restored to her from the coffin; of the family of Lazarus, whom he raised from the grave; of the Syrophœnician woman, whose young daughter he rescued from possession; and of many other sufferers, whose several cases time would fail me to recount. We read not, however, that during his Life on earth, he literally opened the doors of any earthly prison, for the enlargement of the captive, or that, in any instance,

instance, he literally released the Slave or the Convict from the burthen of the galling chain. It is probable, therefore, that all these expressions of the Poor, the Broken-hearted, the Captive, the Blind, and the Bruised, carry something of a mystic meaning, denoting moral disorders and deficiencies under the image of natural calamities and imperfections; and that the various benefits of Redemption are described, under the notion of remedies applied to those natural afflictions and distempers. In this figurative sense the Poor are not those, who are destitute of this world's riches; but those, who before our Lord's appearance in the flesh, were poor in religious treasure; without any clear knowledge of the true God, of their own duty here, and of their hope hereafter; the whole Heathen World, destitute of the light of Revelation. To them our Lord preached the glad tidings of Life, and Immortality. The Broken-hearted are Sinners, not hardened in their sins, but desponding under a sense of guilt, without a hope of expiation. These broken hearts the Redeemer healed, by making the atonement, and by declaring

the means and the terms of Reconciliation. The Captives are they, who were in bondage to the law of Sin, domineering in their members, and overpowering the will of the conscience and the rational faculty. The Blind are the devout, but erring Jews of our Lord's days; blind to the spiritual sense of the symbols of their ritual Law. The Bruised are the same Jews, bruised in their consciences by the galling fetters of a Religion of external ordinances; whom our Lord released, by the promulgation of his perfect law of Liberty. But notwithstanding that the expressions in my text may easily bear, and in the intention of the inspiring Spirit, certainly, I think, involved this mystic meaning; yet since the prophecy, in some of these particulars, had a literal accomplishment in our Lord's miracles, the literal meaning is by no means to be excluded. Indeed, when of both meanings of a prophet's phrase, the literal and the figurative, either seems clearly and equally admissible, the true rule of interpretation seems to be, that the phrase is to be understood in both. This seems a clear conclusion from the very nature of our Lord's miracles.

miracles; which, for the most part, were actions distinctly symbolical of one or other of the spiritual benefits of the Redemption; as such, they were literal completions of the prophecies, taking the place, as it were, of the prophecies so completed, pointing to another latent meaning, and to a higher completion; and thus forming a strict and wonderful union between the Letter and the Spirit of the prophetic language.

This text is not the only passage in the prophetic writings, in which the preaching of glad tidings to the Poor is mentioned, as a principal branch of the Messiah's office. That in the exposition of these prophecies, the figurative sense of the expression is not to exclude the literal, is evident from this consideration,—that the discoveries of the Christian Revelation are in fact emphatically glad tidings to the Poor, in the literal acceptance of the word; to those who are destitute of worldly riches. To those, who from their present condition, might be likely to think themselves forsaken of their Maker; to doubt, whether they

existed for any other purpose, than to minister to the superfluous enjoyments of the higher ranks of society, by the severity of their own toil: To persons in this low condition, and under these gloomy apprehensions, was it not glad tidings to be told, that they had a Hope, beyond the Infidel's expectation, of a perpetual cessation of sorrow in the grave? Hope of a day, when all shall rise, to meet before the common Lord, High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another! When without regard to the distinctions of this transitory Life, each man shall receive his proper portion of Honour or Shame, Enjoyment or Misery, according to the degree of his moral and religious worth! That he, whose humble station excluded him, in this Life, from the society and the pleasures of the Great, (now fallen from their Greatness) shall become the Companion and the Fellow of Angels and of glorified Saints! Shall stand for ever in the Presence of his Redeemer and his God, and partake of the pleasures which are at God's right hand!

Again,

Again, the discoveries of Christianity were made in a manner the most suited to popular apprehension; and, for that reason, they were emphatically glad tidings to the Poor. Its duties are not delivered in a system, built on abstract notions of the eternal fitness of Things; of the Useful and the Fair; notions, not void of truth, but intelligible only to minds highly improved by long habits of study and reflection. In the Gospel, the duties of Man are laid down in short, perspicuous, comprehensive precepts, delivered as the commands of God, under the awful sanctions of eternal rewards and punishments. The doctrines of the Christian Revelation are not encumbered with a long train of argumentative proof; which is apt to bewilder the Vulgar, no less than it gratifies the Learned; they are propounded to the Faith of all, upon the authority of a teacher, who came down from Heaven, "to speak what he knew, and testify what he had seen."

Again, the Poor are they, on whom the Christian doctrine would most readily take effect. Christ's

atonement, it is true, hath been made for all. The benefits of Redemption are no less common to all ranks of Society, than to all nations of the world; and upon this ground, the first news of the Saviour's birth was justly called, by the angels who proclaimed it, "Glad tidings of great Joy which should be to all People." Every situation of Life hath its proper temptations, and its proper duties; and with the aids which the Gospel offers, the temptations of all situations are equally surmountable, and the duties equally within the power of the Believer's improved strength. It were a derogation from the greatness of our Lord's work, to suppose, that, with an equal strength of religious principle once formed, the attainment of salvation should be more precarious in any one rank of Life, than in another. But if we consider the different ranks of men, not as equally religious, but as equally without religion which was the deplorable situation of the world, when Christianity made its first appearance, the Poor were the class of men, among whom the new doctrine was likely to be, and actually was, in the first instance

instance, the most efficacious. The riches of the world, and the gratifications they afford, are too apt, when their evil tendency is not opposed by a principle of religion, to beget that friendship for the world, which is enmity with God. The Poor, on the other hand, excluded from the hope of worldly pleasure, were likely to listen, with the more attention, to the promise of a distant happiness; and, exposed to much actual suffering here, they would naturally be the most alarmed with the apprehension of continued and increased suffering in another world. For this third reason, the Gospel, upon its first publication, was emphatically "glad tidings to the Poor."

From these three considerations, that the Gospel, in the matter, in the manner of the discovery, and in its relation to the state of mankind at the time of its publication, was in fact, in a peculiar sense, "glad tidings to the Poor:" the conclusion seems just and inevitable, that in my text, and in other passages of a like purport, the Prophets describe the Poor, in the literal acceptation of the word,

word, as especial objects of the Divine mercy in the Christian dispensation. And this sense of such prophecies, which so much claims the attention both of Rich and Poor, receives a further confirmation from our Lord's appeal to his open practice of preaching to the Poor, as an evidence to his contemporaries, of his Divine mission. "Go ye," he said to the Baptist's messengers, "and shew John again those things, which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM." Here, "the preaching of the Gospel to the Poor" is mentioned by our Lord among the circumstances of his ministry, which so evidently corresponded with the prophecies of the Messiah, as to render any more explicit answer, to the Baptist's enquiries, unnecessary. This therefore must be a preaching of the Gospel to the Poor literally; for the preaching of it to the figurative Poor, the Poor in religious knowledge, to the Heathen world, commenced not during our Lord's life on earth, and could not be

be alledged by him, at that time, among his own personal exhibitions of the prophetical characters of the Messiah of the Jews.

Assuredly therefore our Lord came "to preach glad tidings to the Poor." "To preach glad tidings to the Poor" was mentioned by the Prophets, as one of the especial objects of his coming. To preach to them he cloathed himself with flesh, and, in his human nature, received the unction of the Spirit. And since the example of our Lord is, in every particular in which it is at all imitable, a rule to our conduct; it is clearly our duty, as the humble followers of our merciful Lord, to entertain a special regard for the religious interests of the Poor, and to take care, what we can, that the Gospel be still preached to them. And the most effectual means of preaching the Gospel to the Poor, is by charitable provisions for the religious education of their children.

Blessed be God, institutions for this pious purpose abound in most parts of the kingdom. The

authority of our Lord's example, of preaching to the Poor, will, with every serious believer, outweigh the objection, which hath been raised against these charitable institutions, by a mean and dastardly policy, imbibed in foreign climes, nor less unchristian, than it is inconsistent with the genuine feelings of the home-bred Briton: a policy, which pretends to foresee, that, by the advantages of a religious education, the Poor may be raised above the laborious duties of his station, and his use in civil life be lost. Our Lord and his Apostles better understood the interests of society, and were more tender of its security and peace, than many perhaps of our modern theorists. Our Lord and his Apostles certainly never saw this danger; that the improvement of the Poor, in religious knowledge, might be a means of confounding civil subordination. They were never apprehensive, that the Poor would be made the worse Servants, by an education which should teach them to serve their Masters upon earth, from a principle of duty to the great Master of the whole family in Heaven. These mean suggestions, of a wicked policy, are indeed contradicted

contradicted by the experience of mankind. The extreme condition of oppression and abasement, the unnatural condition of Slavery, produced, in ancient times, its Poets, Philosophers, and Moralists. Imagine not, that I would teach you to infer, that the condition of slavery is not adverse to the improvement of the human character. Its natural tendency is certainly to fetter the genius, and debase the heart. But some brave spirits, of uncommon strength, have, at different times, surmounted the disadvantages of that dismal situation. And the fact, which I would offer to your attention, is this; that these men, eminent in taste and literature, were not rendered, by those accomplishments, the less profitable slaves. Where then is the danger, that the free-born Poor, of this country, should be the worse hired servants, for a proficiency in a knowledge, by which both Master and Servant are taught their respective duties, by which alone either Rich or Poor may be made wise unto salvation?

Much serious consideration would indeed be due to the objection, were it the object, or the ordinary

and probable effect, of these charitable seminaries for the maintenance and education of the infant Poor, to qualify them for the occupations and pursuits of the higher ranks of society, or to give them a relish for their pleasures and amusements. But this is not the case. Nothing more is attempted, nor can more indeed be done, than to give them that instruction, in the doctrines and duties of religion, to which a claim of common right is in some sort constituted, in a Christian country, by the mere capacity to profit by it; and to furnish them with those first rudiments, of what may be called the trivial literature of their mother tongue, without which they would scarce be qualified to be subjects, even of the lowest class, of the free government under which they are born. A government, in which the meanest citizen, the very mendicant at your doors, unless his life, or his franchises, have been forfeited by crime to public justice, hath his birthrights, and is entrusted with a considerable share of the management of himself. It is the peculiarity, and this peculiarity is the principal excellence, of such governments, that as

the Great have no property in the labour of the Poor, other than what is acquired for a time by a mutual agreement; the poor man, on the other hand, hath no claim upon his superior, for support and maintenance, except under some particular covenant; as an apprentice, a journeyman, a menial servant, or a labourer; which entitles him to the recompence of his stipulated service, and to nothing else. It follows, that, in such states, every man is to derive a support, for himself and his family, from the voluntary exertions of his own industry, under the direction of his own genius, his own prudence, and his own conscience. Hence, in these free governments, some considerable improvement of the understanding is necessary, even for the lowest orders of the people; and much strength of religious principle is requisite, to govern the individual in those common concerns of his private life, in which the laws leave the meanest subject, equally with his betters, master of himself. Despotism, sincere, unalloyed, rigid Despotism, is the only form of government, which may, with safety to itself, neglect the education of its infant Poor. Where it is the principle

ciple of government, that the common people are to be ruled as mere animals; it might indeed be impolitic, to suffer them to acquire the moral discernment, and the spontaneity, of men. But in free states, whether monarchical, or of whatever form, the case is exactly the reverse. The schemes of Providence and Nature are too deeply laid, to be overthrown by man's impolicy. It is contrary to the order of Nature, it is repugnant to the decrees of Providence, and therefore the thing shall never be, that civil liberty should long maintain its ground, among any people disqualified, by ignorance and profligacy, for the use and enjoyment of it. Hence the greatest danger threatens every free constitution, when, by a neglect of a due culture of the infant mind, barbarism and irreligion are suffered to overrun the lower orders. The barriers, which civilized manners naturally oppose, against the encroachments of power on the one hand, and the exorbitance of licentiousness, on the other, will soon be borne down, and the government will degenerate either into an absolute despotic monarchy, or what a subsisting example proves to be by infinite degrees

degrees a heavier curse, the capricious domination of an unprincipled rabble. Thus would ignorance and irreligion, were they once to prevail generally in the lower ranks of society, necessarily terminate in one, or the other, of these two dreadful evils; the dissolution of all government, or the enslaving of the majority of mankind: while true Religion, on the contrary, is the best support of every government, which, being founded on just principles, proposes for its end the joint advancement of the virtue and the happiness of the people; and, by necessary consequence, co-operates with Religion, in the two great purposes, of exalting the general character, and of bettering the general condition of Man. Of every such government Christianity, by consent and concurrence in a common end, is the natural friend and ally: at the same time that, by its silent influence on the hearts of men, it affords the best security for the permanence of that degree of orderly definite liberty, which is an essential principle in every such constitution. The Christian Religion fosters and protects such Liberty, not by supporting the absurd and pernicious doctrine

trine of the natural equality of men : Not by asserting that sovereignty is originally in the multitude, and that Kings are the servants of their people : Not by releasing the conscience of the subject from the obligations of Loyalty, in every supposed case of the Sovereign's misconduct, and maintaining what, in the new vocabulary of modern Democracy, is named *the sacred right of insurrection* : Not by all, or by any, of these detestable maxims—maxims fit only for the counsels of Hell, where they were hatched, and for the FRENCH CONVENTION which adopts them—Not by these maxims, Christianity supports that rational Liberty, which she approves and cherishes ; but by planting in the breast of the individual powerful principles of self-government, which render greater degrees of civil freedom consistent with the public safety.

The Patrons therefore of these beneficent institutions, in which the children of the Poor are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have no reason to apprehend, that true Policy will disapprove the pious work, which Charity hath suggested.

suggested. Thousands of children, of both sexes, annually rescued by means of these charitable seminaries, in various parts of the kingdom, from beggary, ignorance, and vice, are gained as useful citizens to the state, at the same time that they are preserved as sheep of Christ's fold. Fear not therefore to indulge the feelings of benevolence and charity, which this day's spectacle awakens in your bosoms.

It is no weakness to sympathize in the real hardships of the inferior orders. It is no weakness to be touched with an anxiety for their welfare, to feel a complacency and holy joy, in the reflection, that, by the well directed exertions of a godly charity, their interests, secular and eternal, are secured. It is no weakness to rejoice, that, without breaking the order of society, Religion can relieve the condition of poverty from the greatest of its evils, from ignorance and vice. It is no weakness to be liberal of your worldly treasures, in contribution to so good a purpose. The Angels in Heaven participate these holy feelings. Our Father which is in heaven accepts and will reward the work ; provided

vided it be well done, in the true spirit of Faith and Charity. For of such as These—as These who stand before you—arrayed in the simplicity and innocence of Childhood—in the humility of Poverty—of such as These—it was our Lord's express and solemn declaration—of Such is the Kingdom of God!

